

Moderator: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us on our weekly International Brothers of Teamsters COVID-19 update call. To get us started this afternoon, general president Jim Hoffa. Mr. Hoffa?

Jim Hoffa: Well, again, I want to thank everybody for joining us on these calls. This is our tenth week to have these calls, and our participation continues to grow. During this period of time, a lot of us have not been in the office, but we've been out in the field, and that's important, too. I've instructed our directors to keep in contact with their locals and joint councils and everybody in their division to make sure there's constant communication and to make sure our policies are carried out and our contracts enforced.

We think about the many people who are hunkered down – they say shelter in place. Over a million Teamsters are not doing that. They're working every day. They're out in harm's way, whether it's UPS, whether it's bakery, public employees, nurses, they're out there every day where it's perilous, where they're exposed to the virus, but they're doing their jobs. Those people are the true American heroes, and we applaud them, and we feature them in our Teamster magazine this week.

Today, we're going to get updates from the public service division from Jason Rabinowitz. We're also going to hear from health care director Nina Bugbee, who's going to tell about the unique and innovative work of the Women's Conference. And we're going to hear from Jeff Barber, who's going to tell us what's going on with organizing and how the virus and the shutdown of the NLRB has affected organizing, and I guess he's going to be telling us that it's reopened again.

There's been a lot of developments with regard to the stimulus plans. As you know, there's been four stimulus plans. The latest one is called the Heroes Act. It's \$3 trillion. It's very important to make sure our economy does not go into a major recession. We're pumping up the money. We're priming the pump. And I think that's important.

And this bill, this Heroes Act, is very, very important, because this COVID-19 has caused a real downturn in the economy and it's affected many employer pension funds. This Heroes Act does a lot to help our pension funds and to cure the problems. It contains Emergency Pension Plan Relief Act, which basically is a partition program where we can put money into the PPGC, and many of our people can go over there to get relief and to make sure their

pensions continue. It's extremely important, and it's a very innovative act. It's not Butch Lewis, but it's something that really solves our problem with Central States and many of our other critical and declining funds.

You know, unfortunately, in the bill, we don't control Congress, but a part of the bill that got in there is called the Grow Act. The Grow Act is called a composite plan that lets employers set up separate pension funds. We're against that, and we're going to fight to take it out of the bill. I want everybody to know that.

But the Heroes Act is also important because it puts a lot of pressure on OSHA, and it says, we're going to have emergency temporary standards which OSHA has not done, because these are new challenges. We've got to make sure employers are held accountable when it comes to making sure that they provide PPE and a very, very safe workplace. That's important.

Also, the Heroes Act not only requires PPE, but it makes sure that employers fund that, and also funding for COBRA payments. Many of our people have lost their health care. This gives them money for health care and for COVID benefits, and that's important, too.

Also, there's much needed money in this bill for state and local governments. As the fight moves to the Senate, we must mobilize to make sure the Heroes Act passes. Senator Mitch McConnell and Senator Mnuchin have finally acknowledged that we really need another stimulus, and we need more money to make sure we keep this economy going, and when we do come out of it, we're not coming out of a heavy recession, that we get our economy back where it should be.

Secretary Mnuchin testified before Congress yesterday, and he said something that no one could believe. He said that much of the money in the previous stimulus package, called the CARES Act, has not even been spent yet. So he'd better get going, because the economy needs this money and it needs it now. We've got to make sure this money goes to the right people, and make sure it goes to our people that need it, that are in harm's way, and to make sure we keep this economy going. That's what's important to all of us. We're going to be reaching out to the Treasury Secretary to make sure he does that and make sure he helps with other issues.

So we've got a lot on the agenda today, and without further ado, I want to turn this over to our secretary-treasurer Ken Hall.

Ken Hall:

Thank you, Jim, and good afternoon, everyone. You know, it's a particularly strange time in the evolution of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. Some of you live in states where the governor has decided that you can go to the beach and restaurants and gyms, and you may even be able to finally get your hair cut. Some of you live in states where the governor has decided some of these activities are okay, but others are not. And some of you might even live in states where the restrictions change county by county or city by city.

Unfortunately for all of us, the decision to lift restrictions has intersected with politics. President Trump seems to care more about his reelection campaign than keeping Americans safe. He cares more about sound bites than providing us with evidence-based facts. I've never seen a country so divided. After other disasters, we've all come together despite our political differences. Now we have a President who's exploiting the loss of nearly 100,000 lives for political gain.

Governors are opening up with little reliable guidance from the White House amid protests backed by our President. We all want the economy to improve, and it's clear that people need to get back to work. But it's up to us to make sure that employers take all the proper precautions to keep their employees safe.

Right now, we can't count on the government to come to anyone's defense, but we can remember this in November and make sure it doesn't happen again. It's time to bring back an administration that works for us, not against us.

Given the current state of affairs, I want to emphasize how important it is for us to be the watchdogs and to educate ourselves about the virus and best practices to stay safe. As you search for information, please remember to check the Teamsters website for reliable, useful information. Our safety and health department has worked hard to supply us with the most up to date and scientifically sound information. Thanks to all of you for working through this pandemic and keeping our locals and members safe. And as always, please reach out to the international union if there's anything you need from us. I'd now like to turn it over to the president of Teamsters Canada, Francois Laporte.

Francois Laporte:

Thank you very much, general secretary Hall. Good afternoon, general president Hoffa, brothers and sisters.

This is my report number ten on what is going on in Canada, and this week, my report will focus mainly on general announcements made by our various governments.

First of all, let's say that they have announced yesterday that the Canadian and the United States border will remain closed until June 21st, with the exception for essential travelers. Just some numbers regarding the – how this border is important between our two countries. Last week, 127,000 people crossed the land border, and these people were mainly truckers. This is a 88 percent drop compared to the same week a year earlier. So that maintain of the border closed does have a tremendous impact on the trucking industry.

Our economy is slowly and gradually reopening. Each of the 11 provincial and territorial governments are having different roadmaps. For example, Ontario has extended the state of emergency until May 29, but slowly, our economy is reopening.

Last week, I mentioned that a vaccine from China got the government authorization to be tested in Canada. And I also want to emphasize on the fact that there is a lot of Canadian drugs companies that are also investing money and resources to develop the vaccine, and they are working with the Canadian government.

The overall situation in long term care centers and nursing homes, still a major preoccupation for everyone in Canada. Our workers, our members, are exhausted. We have seen a high level of infection for these workers. And this is a real concern. So the institutions also are facing a serious labor shortage in that sector.

The government of Ontario has announced the creation of an inquiry commission to investigate and make recommendations about the long term care center. Other provinces are also going to do the same. So Ontario is the first one, and I suspect that Quebec will be the next one.

The federal government has announced that they will increase payment – transfer payment to the province to help them to deal with the problems in the long term care center.

There are also serious discussions regarding the establishment of a national standard on testing.

Just some words about the National Council on Procurement, the council which I serve on. We are working hard to make sure that

the PPE are available for all Canadians, and most important for the workers who are exposed. We still heavily rely on importation from China for PPE, but we now see more and more Canadian companies who are starting to produce some product.

Before I conclude my report, I just would like to come back on some – on one item that I mentioned last week regarding the food processing. I want to say that we had a meeting with the Labor Minister and the Agriculture Minister. Our priority for the food processing is the health and safety of our workers. We are working in close collaboration with the government officers, with employers, to implement safety measures for the workers. Our agenda is working, lots of meat plants, poultry plants, dairy, and bakery are functioning. And we are keeping a close eye on the situation.

So that concludes my report, and I would like to introduce the IBT safety and health director, LaMont Byrd.

LaMont Byrd:

Okay. Thank you very much. Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to provide you with a brief update on the health and safety related issues concerning the response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The pandemic continues. Currently, the United States, with approximately 5 percent of the world's population, has one-third of the confirmed cases of COVID-19. There are positive indications in some areas of the country, where cases and deaths are declining, but in other areas of the country, the cases are rapidly increasing.

Nationally, the number of new cases and COVID-19 associated deaths continue to climb. Many medical professionals and other scientists are alarmed at the rate at which some states are reopening and the manner in which the population is responding. That is, not maintaining physical distancing and not wearing masks. The experts predict that there will be an increase in the number of cases in these areas, and that the virus will be with us for quite some time.

Researchers estimate that there will be more than 100,000 COVID-19 related fatalities in the US by the end of this month, and despite these facts, there are political and economic pressures for states to resume business operations.

As I reported last week, the safety and health department is developing strategies and tools that our local unions can use to reduce the risk to our members as the country reopens. We

recommend that local union representatives meet with management to determine if the employer developed a reopening plan. If the plan is already developed, the local should get a copy, review it, and offer recommendations if deficiencies are identified. If the plan is yet to be developed, then locals should insist on having a seat at the table to provide input.

As you review and develop policies, we recommend that you include the following elements. One, a comprehensive worksite assessment should be conducted to identify areas where workers may congregate, such as around time clocks and restrooms, break rooms, or vending areas. Each workstation should be assessed to determine if they are configured in a manner that allows for six feet of physical distancing. The floor layout should be evaluated to ensure that distancing is achievable. The ventilation system should be clean, maintained, and operated in a manner that allows the entry of fresh air and frequent room air changes. Identify shared equipment and tools in each work area. Identify frequently touched objects, such as handrails and door knobs. Identify locations in the facility where signage can be installed to remind workers to maintain physical distance, wash hands, and cover coughs and sneezes.

There should be a workforce assessment. Information on the manner in which workers commute to and from work should be documented. Recommend that workers be screened and/or tested prior to entering the worksite. You should ask if there are special precautions for high risk workers. These are individuals who have diabetes, hypertension, or 60 plus years old, pregnant, or have other kinds of illnesses.

Worker training should be conducted to familiarize workers with the return to work policies. The training should emphasize the need to have safe work practices, proper hygiene practices, provide instruction on how to wear PPE, if applicable, how to use safety equipment, such as masks. What to do if someone gets exposed to COVID-19, who to report the case to, what to do if you become ill or have symptoms, and training on any updates to the sick leave policy.

There should be a comprehensive cleaning and disinfection protocol. We recommend that prior to reopening a workplace that a thorough cleaning and disinfection process be implemented using EPA approved products. Establish a policy for routine cleaning and disinfection. Ensure that there's adequate staff to perform cleaning tasks, and that they are trained on how to properly clean, disinfect,

and use the proper PPE. An inventory of PPE safety supplies and EPA approved cleaning supplies should be conducted to ensure that there's an ample supply of such materials on site.

There should be a medical management program. The reopening policy should include language on how to deal with workers who develop symptoms or test positive. Develop a protocol to conduct contact tracing in the workplace. Develop a protocol for workers who come into contact with the person who tested positive or developed COVID-19 related symptoms.

And then there are other issues that may be applicable, including how to provide for childcare. Although the work sites may open, schools may not open, so that may present a dilemma for workers. And where can workers obtain emotional and mental health support? I'll post a detailed document and related information from the CDC and OSHA on these and related issues on the Teamsters website for your review and download. Again, I'd urge you to visit our website at [Teamster.org/COVID19](https://www.teamster.org/COVID19) for information, and encourage your members to do the same. Thank you, and I'd like to now introduce Jason Rabinowitz of the public employees sector.

Jason Rabinowitz: Okay. Thank you, LaMont. Thank you, general president Hoffa and general secretary-treasurer Ken Hall. This is Jason Rabinowitz, director of public services division.

Our 200,000 public service workers in the Teamsters are continuing to perform essential services across the country during the COVID-19 epidemic, and our local unions continue to step up and support our members to fight for our members' safety and to protect our jobs, income, and livelihood during this crisis.

Our members are working in every kind of public sector entity, and doing pretty much every kind of work that is done in the public sector, keeping our country running. And we do need to note on a sad note that we have had members that have become infected with the virus, and we have had some of our members in public service that have lost their lives to the virus, and our entire Teamster family mourns those members and stands with the families during this difficult time.

So our local unions continue to step up, and our main priorities are fighting for – to keep a safe workplace for those members that are working, to make sure there's appropriate PPE, physical distancing, disinfecting, cleaning, that workers who have the ability to work safely from home be permitted to do so, and at the same time,

we're also working around the clock to protect our members' jobs and income. And many, many of our locals have been successful in winning paid administrative leave for members who can't work due to COVID-related reasons. We've won commitments from many of our employers not to impose layoffs during – at least for this fiscal year. And we're very proud that our – that we've been there for our members during this crisis.

However, we also have to note that the economic effects of this pandemic are continuing and are likely to be with us for some time to come. And the effect on public budgets across our country has been catastrophic, and we are seeing now more and more that our local unions are facing proposals from employers to impose layoffs, furloughs, pay freezes, or even pay cuts. And so our locals are in the position of having to step up and fight to minimize the impacts on our membership.

One of the biggest things that we can do, as general president Hoffa mentioned, is to fight for the passage of the provisions of the Heroes Act that provide for stimulus for public entities. The House version of the Heroes Act, and there's a new Senate version now, in the Heroes Act, there's significant stimulus for public sector. That is absolutely critical for our membership, that that stimulus should pass. And there are some cynical members of the Senate that are looking to block this. Senator McConnell has said that public entities should go bankrupt, which is really disgraceful, because these are – this would have a terrible impact on our whole economy, and for the workers that are putting their lives and safety on the line to keep our country running.

So our division has stepped up to create a – working together with the political department, we have a member mobilization plan to encourage our members to get online and write to their members of Congress to urge passage of this. We're going to be trying to focus on those states where we can make a difference, because there may be senators that we can move on this issue. And so we're going to be moving our members on this over the next period of time.

We've been doing regular division webinars for local union leaders, training them on important topics on how to represent our members during this time, including how to fight for safe workplace, how to bargain the effects of the COVID virus, how to bargain with public employers that are facing financial challenges. Hundreds of our local union leaders have joined these. We've done a bunch of them. And in fact, we have another one coming tomorrow. We urge everybody to join in tomorrow, 1:00 PM

eastern, where we're going to be training on how to bargain with employers for safe return to work measures along the lines of what LaMont just talked about, but much more detail. So we hope everybody will join that.

We've also done a couple of member town hall webinars for all public sector members, and we've had thousands of our members join in for presentations on health and safety, protecting our jobs during this time. We were very pleased on the last one to have Senator Elizabeth Warren join us, along with general president Hoffa and Representative Susan Wild. We're going to be doing more of those. Our members have been very enthusiastic in their response to those events.

We've updated our member power tool kit, which is our online resource that provides a lot of materials and resources for our local unions to use in all aspects of their work, and we've added a bunch of stuff around the COVID-19 work, and so we urge everybody to go and utilize those resources.

We've been – our local unions have made it a top priority to continue our internal organizing efforts during this time, because we continue to face the effects of the terrible Janus decision, which took away our fair share rights in public sector. But our local unions are stepping up. We're talking to every new hire. If we can't get to them in person, we're talking to them over Zoom or telephone or email or whatever we need to do. And our locals are maintaining our membership. Our membership percentages in fact have been rising in many local unions, and we're continuing to sign up everybody to membership, and that's critical to emerge from this crisis stronger than ever.

We've also continued to organize externally, because workers in the middle of this crisis are realizing that we need a union now more than ever to protect our rights. And so in the middle of this crisis, several of our local unions have had significant organizing victories, and new bargaining units have joined the Teamsters union, and we have several large campaigns going. We've pivoted very quickly together with the organizing department. Our locals have pivoted to organizing virtually through online, through Zoom, through virtual town hall meetings, email, telephone, everything we can do. But these campaigns are moving successfully, even in the face of these challenges.

So our public sector division is moving. Our members are stepping up. Our members are serving the country. And our union is serving

the membership, protecting our safety and our jobs during this time. I'm very proud of the work our division is doing, our staff, our leaders. We thank you for all that you're doing.

So that's my report, and now I'm very pleased to introduce Nina Bugbee, director of IBT health care division and the Women's Conference. Nina?

Female:

Nina, are you on the line? You may be muted. Nina, go ahead. Why don't we jump to our next speaker, Jeff Farmer, from our organizing department?

Jeff Farmer:

Okay. Well, thank you. Hello, everyone. Thanks for this opportunity to update you on the organizing work of our union during this pandemic crisis. These weekly reports of how our union is responding to the crisis and how you all are fighting for our members are inspiring. It's also valuable ammunition for our organizing, as it dramatically points out the difference between Teamster representation and what non-union workers face in their workplaces, with no contract, no voice.

It's been two months, but we're staying focused on our mission to organize the unorganized and to build our union, even as we confront new and substantial hurdles. Like all of you, we've been forced to adapt and adopt new techniques to reach workers, creatively using social media, for example, to develop employee lists, or conduct virtual campaign meetings on Zoom, or hustle out messages, or geofence a work site or company headquarters. These are new tools, so every day for a full hour we're conducting training classes for all of our organizers, and we'll soon be launching a deep dive into all aspects of digital organizing.

But there's really no substitute for real life one on one conversations with workers, so we've been doing massive phone banking, directly calling and having conversations with thousands of workers on big campaigns, speaking with port drivers in LA, Long Beach, XPO drivers and bus and transit workers across the country, public employees, such as University of California administrative professionals, and school district workers in Clark County, Nevada, where we're now at over 1,300 new members signed up, and counting.

You know, our union normally runs more NLRB elections than any other union, but it's been an on again, off again checkerboard as far as the NLRB, with delays, procedures, and rule changes. It's been a real challenge. But we are now conducted NLRB elections

to win recognition.

Two examples. Next week, we'll be counting the ballots at an MV transportation unit in Fort Walton Beach with local 991, and then next month – that was mail in ballots. And then next month, there's going to be two in person elections at local 838 in Kansas City, with waste and building products warehouse.

So we – you know, the process is in place. We just need to push the system. This time has also allowed us to initiate and hone our plans on major strategic campaigns, such as ports, XPO, and Amazon. A quick example is the nation's intermodal yards. This is the intersection of trucks and trains. And here, as a union, we've had great success, brought in thousands of workers as we fight to take back a Teamster core industry.

We are now coordinating a plan with nine local unions to organize at multiple sites all at the same time using local union staff and stewards on the ground as we employ digital organizing tools to reach workers and connect them virtually.

In this moment, we see that the media and the public have rediscovered that front line workers are essential to our economy. So as the Teamsters union, we're standing with them. With IBT's departments working together, our union has launched a new website, Solidarity Is Essential, for non-union workers to know their rights when it comes to either health and safety or the right to form a union.

We've participated in distributing PPE and food to non-union workers in desperate straits. Non-union workers in this country need to know the Teamsters union has their back.

So clearly, this is a time of tremendous opportunity and challenge, and we've seen several local unions come to us with very sudden and unique opportunities that have arisen where workers are fighting back. So calls are coming in to our union. If you receive a call as a local union, give us a call, and let's discuss it. Let's brainstorm, put together a plan. Every day, we're assisting local unions and divisions and stand ready to help you, whether it's to thwart a decert threat or develop an internal organizing plan to sign up more members and build power, or to help you organize in this changed environment, as we're doing at local 731 in waste, or in warehousing with local 406 in Michigan.

Let me just close with this. The other day, a notorious union buster

and right wing corporate lobbyist was warning corporations of the threat of worker insurgency and labor movement activism. I think he was trying to drum up business for himself. But then he ended with this. He said, the good news is that most unions do not have competent union organizing staff that are skilled in managing this opportunity. Well, to that we say you can talk all you want about whoever you want, but you're not talking about the Teamsters, because not only do we have a hell of a competent organizing staff, but we also have hundreds of local unions who get it, that in our union, everyone is an organizer.

So stay safe. Stay strong. Keep organizing. And I'll turn it back to general president Jim Hoffa.

Jim Hoffa: Well, I think – is Nina Bugbee back on?

Nina Bugbee: I am, and I apologize. My Air Pods went dead. Thank you.

Jim Hoffa: Okay. Nina, why don't you give your report.

Nina Bugbee: Will do. Take two. As director of the health care division and Women's Conference, I would like to first thank IBT training and development department Cindy Impala and staff, along with IT director Rebecca Stein, for the coordination and implementation of two Zoom webinars that took place last week for our members. They were Gretchen **Grendel**, managing stress during coronavirus, and Teamster historian Karen Jones, Teamsters respond to crisis. If you or your members did not have the opportunity to join these webinars, they are now recorded and available to any local, joint council, or division. So if you're new to Zoom, I encourage you to utilize these webinars as you acclimate to these new – this new normal or method to work for or with our members.

Previously, on two health care division reports, I informed you of a COVID-19 health care division online survey for our members, that the health care division worked in tandem with the IBT communication department, Kara Deniz, and strategic research and campaigns, **Elisa Leighton**. Over 1,300 health care workers responded to the survey, and the results offered valuable data to back up personal experiences about dangerous situations workers face on the front line, and what the health care division can do to improve working conditions for health care workers.

Today, I would like to speak to all of you about how many of you can help me help you within the health care division. As many of you know, approximately one year ago, general president Hoffa

recognized the need for a Teamsters health care division, and COVID-19 certainly supports his wise decision.

Currently, the health care division has approximately 50,000 members in many different settings, such as hospitals, nursing homes, ambulance and paramedic drivers, Red Cross blood collection, and much more. During this last year, the health care division has been working with Mary Pat Ashe from economics and contracts department, Pam Turner from affiliate bookkeeping systems department, and now Cassandra Ogren from SRC, and together, our research shows that over 200 of the 450 Teamster locals represent many of these essential health care workers. The locals, the names of the facilities, the contracts, and a portion of the worker title and classification have been identified.

At this juncture, the health care division will be drilling down on details of the who, what, when, and where, so we can better work together through the locals, joint councils, and divisions on how to collectively represent these members, along with organizing more health care workers.

During the next few weeks, principal officers through their assigned business agents will receive from the health care division coordinator Kathy Harman and program assistant Megan Hahn a letter with an enclosed form that will need to be filled out and returned in order to identify these health care members and the specific work that they perform, such as their job classification and job titles through their contract recognition agreement and job duties.

I look forward to working together with health care locals to establish an accurate database of Teamster workers within the health care division. This concludes my special request and report for today, and I turn it back over to our great general president Hoffa.

Jim Hoffa:

Well, thank you, Nina. And this has been a good report today. I think everybody learns a lot when we have these. We're strong when we communicate. But now we have something else we've added to the agenda, and this really talks about food processing locals, dairy, warehouse, bakery, and beverage, a new initiative, a day of action.

We all read about what's going on in the food service divisions, about how workers are being forced to go back to dangerous conditions. One of the things is about Smithfield Foods in South

Dakota. One facility had 800 people diagnosed with the coronavirus. At Smithfield Foods, it's unbelievable how bad it is. Tyson Foods, people stand side by side with no regard to separation, and they have to butcher 80 chickens a minute. Can you imagine that?

This is what's going on. So we really want to have a day of action to bring attention to this and to focus on this for the entire nation. The purpose of the day of action is to raise awareness about the dangerous and shortsighted practices that the employers and regulations have allowed to happen in our critical food supply chains.

We've got to make sure that our voices are heard, and we want to get these local on board so that they participate to protect our food supply chain, and most of all protect our workers.

Our slogan is protect food workers, save America's food supply. That's our motto. That's our slogan. Please commit when you're contacted by the IBT and directors about participating in this important day of action. People will be reaching out to you in the near – at certain times, and Iain Gold will be researching this, and if you want to reach out to him, he can help you get involved in this important program. Iain Gold is in the IBT strategic research and campaign department. This is an important day of action, and it calls attention to a very important crisis that we're having right now.

So in the meantime, until next week, take care of yourself, keep out there, be proud, be proud Teamsters, stay safe, stay healthy, stay united, and most of all, stay Teamster strong. Thank you.

[End of Audio]